



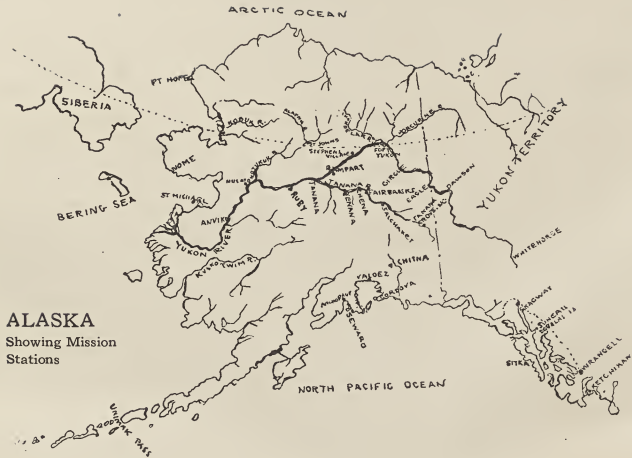
THE BORDERLAND OF THE POLE

A SKETCH OF OUR CHURCH
WORK IN ALASKA



Prot. Episc

THE BOARD OF MISSIONS
of the EPISCOPAL CHURCH
281 FOURTH AVENUE :: NEW YORK



THE BORDERLAND OF THE POLE



TO the far north, lying in a remote corner of the map, is a long strip of territory which the Indians named Alaska, "the Great Country." It is a land of snow-clad mountains and frozen rivers; abundant fisheries, rich mines and fruitful fields. At one extreme is the ice-bound arctic coast, at the other a climate as mild as that of New England. Three times as large as the state of Texas, it has an area more than two-thirds that of the states lying east of the Mississippi. Practically no railroads net its surface. A few steamboats ply upon its rivers in summer; but dog-sleds and snow-shoes are its only means of communication in winter.

When Secretary Seward, in 1867, purchased Alaska from Russia for \$7,200,000, public opinion characterized it as "a country fit only for a polar bear garden." This indifference continued until gold was discovered.

MISSIONARY BEGINNINGS Missionary work in Alaska practically began with its discovery. In 1793 the Russo-Greek Church sent its first missionaries to what was then called Russian America. Churches were built at the trading stations, and schools and hospitals were conducted on behalf of the natives. This work was maintained through many years by the Russian Government.

About the year 1838 missionaries of the Church of England reached the people of the Valley of the Yukon.

They followed the track of the Hudson's Bay Company and established the work at Fort Yukon, and at Fort Adams, near Tanana.

After the transfer of the territory to the United States, the Presbyterians were first to enter the new field. In 1877 Mrs. A. R. MacFarland, who accompanied the Rev. Sheldon Jackson of the Presbyterian Board of Missions when he went to study conditions in Alaska, began work at Fort Wrangell. When Dr. Jackson returned to the States in the fall, Mrs. MacFarland remained. For a year this dauntless woman, the first American missionary in the territory, remained alone, practically cut off from the world.

Other Christian bodies—the Moravians, the Friends, Roman Catholics, Congregationalists, Methodists and Baptists—took up work in the order named.

Through the influence of Dr. Jackson, a division of territory in Alaska was made among the several missionary boards. In this division, though we were not a subscribing party, the portion indicated for our activity was the Valley of the Yukon; and there, as a matter of fact, the chief part of our work has been done.



THE MISSION AT ANVIK

OUR FIRST MISSIONS

At the request of the Board of Missions, Bishop Paddock of Washington Territory made a reconnoitering tour to Alaska in the summer of 1882. It was not until four years later, however, that the first missionary was appointed. In 1886, the Rev. Octavius Parker, a devoted missionary in Oregon, volunteered. With his family he started for St. Michael, where he passed a most melancholy winter. Discouragements of every sort crowded upon him; one of his party died; the question of establishing himself effectively seemed a difficult one.

ANVIK In the spring the natives of Anvik invited him to visit their village, 450 miles by water from St. Michael, and here the Church gained her first foothold in Alaska. Mr. Parker was joined the following year by the Rev. John W. Chapman, who after more than twenty-five years of service is still the devoted missionary at Anvik.

The natives were Ingiliks, partly Indian and partly Eskimo. They lived in under-ground houses and were superstitious, dirty, ignorant and degraded. Rude buildings were erected for a mission house and the school house. In 1889 Mr. Parker was compelled to retire, after three years of service, but Mr. Chapman labored on. In 1894 the first church was erected, the money for it being a part of the first United Offering of the Woman's Auxiliary. Little by little the people came out of their holes in the earth and built themselves houses. The community has been physically and morally transformed; industry and cleanliness have been successfully inculcated. A saw-mill, the gift of a generous eastern layman, has been a most practical means of evangelization, not only furnishing

lumber for houses but healthful occupation for the men. This transformation has been wrought, not by legislation or civilization as such, but by the consistent teaching and example of a devoted Christian man and his splendid helpers. Bishop Rowe says "Through these long years, in the loneliness of this far-away station, Mr. Chapman has remained the kind, wise, spiritual shepherd of these native souls in the wilderness. The mission has pursued high ideals, and has ministered spiritually and helpfully to a vast region."

POINT HOPE In the far north, inside the Arctic Circle, two hundred miles beyond Behring Strait, on a bleak cape which juts out into the Arctic Ocean, the Church planted her second mission. Lieutenant-Commander Stockton of the United States Navy, an earnest Churchman, called attention to the degraded condition of the Eskimo at Point Hope. Not only were they bearing the blight of primitive ignorance, but they were exposed to the vicious influence of the white men who composed the crews of whaling vessels. The Board of Missions called for a medical missionary, and Dr. John B. Driggs volunteered. Nineteen years he remained among these people, established a school and trained them in better habits of life, laying foundations upon which others have built. At the end of this time he resigned, being broken down by reason of his loneliness, and was succeeded by the Rev. A. R. Hoare, who has achieved marvellous results.

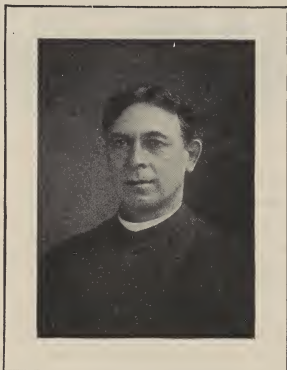
Bishop Rowe tells of a recent visitation to this one-time degraded community. "It was a surprise and a joy to hear that congregation of Eskimo able to say or sing the responses of all the usual services, the canticles, psalter, and about fifty or more hymns. I don't know whether it would be possible to find an-



THE CONGREGATION AT POINT HOPE OUTSIDE THEIR CHURCH

other congregation anywhere so well-trained. I heard this congregation repeat the catechism from the beginning to the end almost perfectly. I confirmed eighty and it was interesting to know that a whole village of adults, with very few exceptions, received the Holy Communion."

TANANA Anvik in the south, Point Hope in the far north, were the first two missionary posts of the Church. The third venture was in the great interior, 600 miles up the Yukon, where at Tanana the Rev. J. L. Prevost took up the work begun by the Church of England missionaries previously mentioned. For fifteen years, as both priest and physician, he ministered to the surrounding Indian tribes. The location of the mission at the junction of Tanana and Yukon Rivers gave it great strategic importance. From this center a work has been done which has resulted in the baptism of more than 3,000 Indians living over many hundred miles of country. Plying up and down the river in his little missionary launch, or traveling the trails with his dog-team, Mr. Prevost became the best friend of thousands of natives. He retired in 1906, but the influence of his work still continues.



THE RT. REV. PETER TRIMBLE ROWE, D.D.

THE BISHOP OF ALASKA

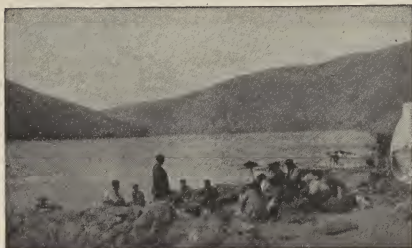
HIS PREPARATION

The year 1895 found the Church with these three missions, 900 miles apart, at Anvik, Point Hope and Tanana. It was evident that, if advance was to be made, a bishop must be elected, and in the General Convention of that year the choice fell upon the Rev. Peter Trimble Rowe. He was a Canadian by birth and had spent the first five years of his ministry on wilderness trails as missionary to an Indian tribe. The contact with pioneers

and savages, canoe-travel and snow-shoeing, the struggle through the storm and the camp in the open, were all familiar to him. From this work he was called to the parish at Sault Ste. Marie. When he took charge there were six communicants; when, at the end of ten years, he was called to be bishop there were 250, and missions had been established at five or six outlying points.

With such a training and outlook did Bishop Rowe go to Alaska, a post which beyond any other in the American Church demands courage and endurance, both physical and moral. How he has discharged his responsibility the whole Church and the whole nation knows. He is none the less a hero because a modest one. His is a name to conjure with in Alaska.

Bishop Rowe established his home at Sitka and began the organization of the work. Back of all the history which follows stands this man. Into each activity and achievement must be read his wise leadership and inspiring courage.



Bishop Rowe preaching to a group of Indians on the banks of the Yukon

HIS PROBLEM

With the coming of Bishop Rowe to Alaska a great enlargement of the work began. Hitherto we had ministered only, or chiefly, to the natives; all our missions were planted with that end in view. But gold had been discovered in the Klondike region and at once Alaska became to the imagination what California had been fifty years before. Thousands came pouring in—the great majority of them to meet only danger and disappointment, if not death. This was a compelling call to the Church; it was the cry of our own race and blood. These followers of the trail the Church must follow; she could not permit these seekers after gold to forget the eternal riches of Christian love and grace.

And so, while still pushing forward the work on behalf of the native peoples, the bishop also turned his attention to the physical and spiritual needs of the white explorers and settlers. Hospital after hospital sprang up, nurses and teachers came. Where the need was greatest the bishop and his helpers might always be found. He cheered and inspired; men believed in and admired him—"the best musher in Alaska," conspicuous for courage in a land of brave men.

A gold strike was made at Nome, and with the first rush of eager prospectors went in Mr. Prevost, sent by the bishop, who soon followed and aided with his own hands in the building of the church. The camp at Fairbanks sprang up; immediately it was manned and equipped. Another rush into Cordova, and though the saloon men were bidding for the only available lumber, the bishop got it first to build a clubhouse for men, destined to be the only competitor of fourteen saloons.

So he goes back and forth across his great district, up and down its rivers in the short summer time—

formerly by boat or canoe, but now in his launch, the "Pelican." In the winter he is away across the trackless wilderness, a thousand miles or more, behind his dogs, cherrily facing hardships and making light of dangers, but none the less carrying his life in his hand as he goes about the daily work.

SOME OF HIS HELPERS

In Archdeacon Stuck, who gave up his position as Dean of Dallas, Texas, to devote his life to missionary work among the snows of Alaska, Bishop Rowe has an active and courageous helper. Summer and winter he travels the trails from camp to camp, and from mission to mission. When a fresh gold strike is made, in goes the Archdeacon. Sometimes he will have a hospital in operation before the town is a year old. Particularly is he interested in the preservation and betterment of the native races, the Eskimos and the Indians, endangered by their contact with the white man and their own lack of knowledge. Everywhere his hand is raised and his voice is heard in their behalf.



SERVICE FOR WHITE MEN ON THE KOYUKUK
Archdeacon Stuck is preaching. Less than half the congregation is within range of the camera

It is a devoted little band of men and women which Bishop Rowe has gathered about him. Nowhere has the Church been better served, but the workers are all too few. Conspicuous as has been the service of men in the Alaska mission, that of the women has been even more remarkable. We might tell of Miss Farthing, sister of the Bishop of Montreal, a cultured and refined gentlewoman, who at Nenana gathered in her little cabin two or three outcast children. From such a small beginning grew Tortella Hall, with its thirty-five Indian boys and girls, for whom in the end she laid down her life.

We might tell of Deaconess Carter establishing the hospital in the new mining camp at Fairbanks, and then volunteering to go for five years into the silent land beyond the Arctic Circle, to plant a new mission among the Koyukuks and Kobuks; the only white woman within eighty miles. We might tell of Miss Woods' brave battle against diphtheria in the little hospital at Fort Yukon, or of Miss Langdon, working alone at Tanana, or of Deaconess Sabine, the first of this band of brave women; but we would only have begun to call the roll of those who have served, and still are serving. In less conspicuous ways, perhaps, but with patience and self-sacrifice they have met drudgery and hardship, giving their best to others for the Master's sake. One is not surprised that Bishop Rowe exclaims "Alaska has the best women in the world!"

HIS GREAT H I G H W A Y

Alaska is the land of one great river, without which it could scarcely have been explored — much less, occupied and inhabited. The Yukon is the great highway. Over its waters in the brief summer, and upon its frozen surface in winter, go



THE PELICAN WITH DOG TEAM AND SLED ON BOARD

travelers by boat and sled, and among them the representatives of the Church. Familiar to the dwellers along its banks is the little "Pelican" bearing Bishop Rowe or Archdeacon Stuck—sometimes both of them—with a half-breed engineer and one of the faithful dogs. Everywhere along the river in the summer time may be found the temporary camps of the Indians, to whom the short fishing season means food through the long winter for themselves and their dogs. Here a stop is made at a native camp to baptize a baby—there a marriage is performed. A Communion service is held or a call made at a fishing camp to pick up some boys and take them to a far-away boarding school. The work is as varied as it is far-reaching. Not a mission point along the river is neglected, and places which formerly could never be visited through agency of the hand-paddled canoe look forward once a year to the coming of the "Pelican," and wait to hear the familiar throbbing of her motor, as does the New Yorker for his morning mail, or the farmer for the postman's whistle.

GLIMPSES OF THE WORK

Within the limits of this leaflet it would be impossible to mention in detail the work of the several missions, but we may cite a few examples. Fairbanks, the metropolis of central Alaska, was a new mining camp when Bishop Rowe secured an early entrance for the Church. The log building which was a chapel on Sundays became a reading room on week-days for the rough-clad miners. A hospital was built and ministered to the sick through the range of a wide territory. Missions both to white men and Indians have spread along the valley of the river on either hand, and now Fairbanks is the center of what is known as the Tanana Valley Mission, with half a score of workers, schools and missions, hospitals and reading rooms, distributing tons of literature in lonely mining camps and carrying everywhere the message of the Master.

Over on the coast, at Cordova, may be found the unique settlement work called "The Red Dragon," a clubhouse for men which on Sundays is converted into a place of worship. The Church in Alaska ministers to human need as a preliminary to and accompaniment of an effective preaching of the Gospel.

At Fort Yukon, far up the great river, Dr. Grafton Burke practises his profession—our one missionary physician in Alaska, and the only physician within 500 miles of his post. Men stricken by disease or accident are brought for days on dog-sleds to reach the little hospital at the mission, and the dauntless doctor's dog team counts 150 miles as nothing in an effort to minister to suffering.

Such are some of the lights and shadows of the mission work in Alaska. "Who can study them and not be fascinated by the picture? The Arctic nights and rosy dawns; the mighty rivers and primeval

forests; sturdy miners wresting from the earth her golden store; traders and Eskimos and Indians; the new-sprung towns with their wild license, or the lonely camp shut in by the wilderness of trackless snow; the dog-teams and the reindeer; the sturdy sons of the free North whose hands are so hard, but whose hearts are frequently so soft, and whose friendship is so steadfast; and moving among them all—ministering to them under what discouragement and difficulty—the brave nurses and faithful clergy, and our heroic, hard-pressed bishop!”

So does Alaska by its sheer power to inspire and enlist the Church for missionary enterprise repay many-fold that which has been given her.

STATISTICS

THE STAFF:

Bishop, priests and deacons	16
Lay readers (including six natives) . . .	9
Women workers (deaconesses, nurses and teachers)	18
Physicians	1

THE PLANT:

Church buildings	29
Hospitals	4
Dispensaries	4
Day and industrial schools	12
Library	1
Saw mills	2

THE WORK:

Mission stations, central and outlying . . .	49
Communicants (approximate)	822
Sunday schools	23

THE GIFTS:

Appropriation from the Board of Missions .	\$72,654
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Given on apportionment	1,067

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THE WORK IN ALASKA

JANUARY 1, 1920

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Archdeacon: THE VENERABLE HUDSON STUCK, D.D.
Fort Yukon, Alaska

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MISS KOSTER

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REV. & MRS. J. W. CHAPMAN
DEACONESS STERNE

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Served from Nenana

CHENA NATIVE VILLAGE

Served from Nenana

CHITINA

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Vacant

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